



REPLY TO THE  
ATTENTION OF

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND**  
**OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER**  
**3511 NW 91ST AVENUE**  
**MIAMI, FL 33172-1217**

July 4, 2004

Commander

To the Men and Women of the United States Southern Command:

The freedoms and liberties we enjoy as Americans today were not always guaranteed. In fact, the concepts of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were, at the inception of our nation, radical ideas. We sometimes forget that the signatories of the Declaration of Independence took a bold step by signing this document and sending it to the King George III. Yet 228 years ago, these men publicly stated their collective belief "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness..."

These rights have been protected by the sacrifices of patriots throughout our history. Today, we in the military serve as the guarantors of these rights for current and future generations of Americans. Former President Ronald Reagan referred to America as "a shining city on a hill." For millions of people around the world who strive to achieve the freedoms we cherish, this statement is as true as ever. Our nation's grand experiment with democracy and freedom are still an example for the world to behold.

Today, we should all remember the sacrifices made to preserve our freedoms. The country you defend appreciates your sacrifices, great and small.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JTH", is positioned above the printed name of the Commander.

James T. Hill  
General, US Army  
Commander